



A SWANSEA LOCKDOWN ANTHOLOGY



UNLOCKED

A Swansea Lockdown Anthology

After the arrival of Covid 19 to the British Isles, lockdown was announced on the 23rd of March, bringing with it an array of challenges for individuals and families across Swansea. The sun started shining and many people found great comfort in nature. Many feared the worst, and for some that became a reality. Homes became makeshift classrooms and offices, many volunteered to help their neighbours. Almost everyone missed someone. With no end in sight, people turned to old and new habits for comfort or to try to make sense of this 'new normal', one of those was writing.

The Fusion Programme put a call out into the ether of the Swansea social media network, asking people to share their writing for a one-off collection.

Pieces came in from across the city, from people of all ages and situations. Many explore the good and bad thrown up by the unique situation the virus has created, some felt inspired to explore other topics. These are the submissions we received, we hope you will find some reflections of your own experiences and enjoy the diverse writing from our creative community.

Heb fod dan glo

Antholeg o'r cyfnod dan Gyfyngiadau Symud yn Abertawe - 2020

Ar ôl i COVID-19 gyrraedd Ynysoedd Prydain, cyhoeddwyd y byddai cyfyngiadau symud ar waith o 23 Mawrth, ac yn sgîl hyn cafwyd amrywiaeth o heriau i unigolion a theuluoedd ar draws Abertawe. Dechreuodd yr haul dywynnu ac roedd byd natur yn gysur mawr i lawer. Roedd nifer ohonom yn ofni'r gwaethaf, ac i rai, daeth hynny'n realiti. Daeth cartrefi'n ddosbarthiadau ac yn swyddfeydd dros dro, a gwirfoddolodd nifer o bobl i helpu eu cymdogion. Roedd bron pawb yn gweld eisiau rhywun arall. Heb unrhyw ddiwedd o fewn golwg, trodd pobl at hen arferion a rhai newydd i'w cysuro, neu i geisio gwneud synnwyr o'r 'normal newydd' hwn, ac un o'r arferion hynny oedd ysgrifennu.

Cysylltodd y Rhaglen Cyfuno â'r rhwydwaith cyfryngau cymdeithasol, gan ofyn i bobl rannu eu gwaith ysgrifenedig er mwyn creu casgliad untro.

Cafwyd gwaith o bob rhan o'r ddinas, gan bobl o bob oedran a sefyllfa. Mae nifer ohonynt yn trafod y da a'r drwg sydd wedi deillio o'r sefyllfa unigryw a grëwyd gan y feirws, a chafodd rhai eu hysbrydoli i archwilio pynciau eraill. Dyma'r gwaith a dderbyniom - gobeithiwn y bydd rhai ohonynt yn adlewyrchu'ch profiadau eich hun, a'ch bod yn mwynhau gwaith ysgrifenedig amrywiol ein cymuned greadigol.

Part 1: Working from home

Desk littered with biscuit crumbs,
Every screen smudged with sticky thumbs,
Over and over - the days thrum
beating me in rolling waves till I am overcome.
Again, no work is done.

"Shhh...Daddy's working" softly I say,
into tear-stained faces, fists curl and nerves fray.
From the firmly shut door I herd them away,
Only to stand silent, forehead to wood and pray:
"Give me sanctuary". But safe inside he'll stay,
And I'll get no work done again today.

Papers stand neglected, deadlines long-past,
Childcare has installed a ceiling-glass.
In my own story, I find myself recast
From mother and person, but the kids have surpassed
The self-defining work. I know I won't be the last
Who is denied deadline extension, as if I can't really be arsed.
Pandemic pressure reveals that women's work still comes last.

Part 2: Home from Working

Heading back from the home I call my workplace,
Thinking always of my kids - their welcome embrace,
But on this hustling tube - which scarce masks don't erase -
The infection is here with us. Reaching out across limited space
And it's just another day, my life on the line for this rat-race.

An economic punch, from which I am still bruising,
Of the ninety-four twenty-five a week I was using
To feed a whole family. No sense in refusing
Cleaning work in a household financially cruising
But wrist-deep in bleach I believe that they are abusing
My poverty. Even in working, I am losing.

For my family, it seems I carry the economy on my back,
Scrubbing and shining with a cough that hacks.
Even now, for each Jubilee stop - a year of life, axed.
Make no mistake - it is with intention that our lives lack
Quality - no, this held by those with the power to act
But instead i'm told "be grateful you're not sacked".

Eleanor Butler Church

Age 25 - Digital Marketing Assistant - Cinema&Co



The Talented Thomases

What makes a son turn against his father? It can only be something unforgivable. The Thomases had three children: Llewelyn, Aeronwy and Colm. I asked the long-haired museum attendant at The Boat House about Colm, as I knew the others had died.

"He's living in Italy. Did you know him then?" the young man asked.

"I knew Llewelyn."

"Really? Why don't you write something in the visitor's book? That's what it's there for. We never hear anything about Llewelyn; he was a mystery. What was he like?"

"I knew him in his twenties. He was talented, changeable, cagey, sometimes witty, sometimes wild," I said, "like his Dad, apparently."

We were on a short break in South Wales ten years ago, planning to lunch at Saundersfoot, when I noticed the signpost to the village of Laugharne.

"You've heard of Dylan Thomas, haven't you?" I asked my husband.

"I've seen 'Under Milk Wood.'"

I was pleased as he was English and not into poetry.

"We have plenty of time. Shall we take a detour? It's very pretty there and we could visit Dylan's boathouse."

The lime washed cottage clung to a cliff overlooking the silky vastness of the estuary. It was one of the houses where the poet lived and wrote and was now a museum. Gulls swooped and squawked, herons paused as they waded the shallows. We bought coffee and Welsh cakes and perched on damp benches on the terrace. The sun failed to pierce the morning mists over the little jetty where fishing boats would once have bobbed or settled in the mud. The harbour had been filled in and paved over to make room for visitors since I'd last visited. We explored the stepped garden, with its rustic seating and views of mud-flats and the Bristol Channel and we peered into the garage on stilts, where Dylan had worked on his verse at a battered desk - until opening time, when he would slip down the lane to Brown's Hotel. Caitlin, would join him and they would drink with the locals.

When London was beginning to tap its toes at the start of The Swinging Sixties, most twenty year olds I knew wanted to live there. I'd travelled from Swansea for my

first proper job in Whitehall. A friend came and joined me, as she was keen to be up in "the smoke" too. She was a slender, sultry girl with half-closed eyes called Rhiannon. She had a colourful and exciting past. She weaned me from milky "Camp" to strong black coffee and encouraged me to smoke. Her mother bought a lease on a basement flat in Onslow Place, so we moved from my Putney attic and her mother became our landlady.

We loved living in South Kensington, and became a foursome: my fiancée and I and Rhiannon and our medical student friend, who was keen on her.

One day Llewelyn turned up at the flat. He was a slight, snub-nosed and curly-haired young man, anaemic looking and a compulsive smoker and drinker. He was flourishing as a copywriter, working for J Walter Thomson, the advertising agency. Rhiannon's step-father was Dylan's lawyer, so she'd known him from childhood visits to her home. In no time, it seemed, they became lovers and the medical student vanished. They spent their evenings on bar-stools in a haze of smoke at our local, in Sydney Place, then, when sufficiently pie-eyed, rolled home to eat the casserole she'd prepared earlier. I learnt not to mention Llewelyn's parents, for if I did, in however accidental a manner, he would fling plates around. One ended in the TV screen. I realised that whenever his parents were mentioned there would be a drama, then they would anaesthetize themselves with booze or amphetamines.

They decided to marry, and Rhiannon found herself a job in a boutique. The Chelsea Register Office was booked, new suits were bought and friends and families turned up on the day. Not Caitlin though, who was writing her life story and living with a lover in Italy. Champagne, lobsters and hampers of goodies were spread out on our dining table for the guests. "The Old Cronies" arrived; Dylan's literary and artistic pals, Kingsley Amis, Elizabeth Jane Howard and Pamela Hansford-Johnson. Nicolette Devas, Llewelyn's aunt, who, like his mother, had been a model and then a lover of Augustus John, was also at the wedding breakfast, so were the columnists, Jeffrey Barnard and George Gale. There was so little notice of the marriage that most guests gave the couple cheques, which they spent on an Amsterdam honeymoon and what remained over the following months in the pub round the corner.

I was happy living there but began to find the pace of life waring and felt that young marrieds should have their own space. I helped pay the rent, coaxed them to bed when they passed out and woke them for work in the mornings, but after more broken crockery and drunken scenes it was time to move on and I found a flat share in Mayfair. I lost touch with them when we married and settled in a basement on

the Chelsea embankment. JWT moved Llewelyn to Sydney, Australia, and Rhiannon had a baby called Jemima, but I heard from family friends that the marriage did not last long.

Twenty odd years passed and I was at a poetry reading given by Aeronwy. She looked so much like him. She was an accomplished reader and speaker and the poetry was as powerful as ever. I went up to the podium afterwards to congratulate her and asked after her eldest brother. I explained I had shared a flat with him and his wife years before. "He's moved back to Wales," she said, "and become a vegetarian. He has a new partner and is happy living a simpler life." I sent my best wishes to him through her, but I expect she forgot, as you do at such events. Then ten years ago I heard from a close friend that he had died. There had been an obituary in "The Guardian," but I had not seen it.

So, why did he turn against his parents? I just accepted the fact at the time, for some people do. When my second husband and I returned from our Welsh break I googled the obituary, written by Geoffrey Gibbs. "The copywriter Llewelyn Thomas, who has died aged 61," it said, "was a witty, erudite and convivial man in the company of those he knew and trusted, but his life was overshadowed by the genius of his father... and by the feeling of abandonment he experienced in his youth. At heart," it said, "he was a wary person. He dreaded appearing at events to mark Dylan's work and went out of his way to hide his background. Those who worked with him during the manic, inventive years he spent in London, at the advertising agency, J Walter Thompson ... knew better than to talk about his parents. In Dawlish, the Devon seaside town where he settled in 1994 he was known simply as Tom Llewelyn; even his doctors were unaware of his true identity."

So, it seems, he was abandoned because his nomadic mother had left him in the care of her sister when he was only two years old. According to the obituary he was sent to Magdalen College School, Oxford, which he found a miserable experience. I could imagine how he would have been picked upon and it would have haunted him for the rest of his life. As the eldest sibling he would have had to look after the other two in the holidays, while his parents argued and drank, and he would have felt so deserted when his father died in New York when he was only 13. Through the trust fund set up to handle Dylan's royalties, he was able to go to Harvard and he became a brilliant copy-writer, for he had a most inventive mind. He worked on new projects because he had an unusual way of looking at things and he won prizes for his adverts.

During the 1970s," the obituary continued, "he worked at JWT's Australian offices, to get away from those who had known Dylan or who insisted on talking about him. On his return, he resigned from the agency by sending a telegram

from the pub, and took up work as a gardener. As abruptly, he left London and was discovered living in a bed sit in Hull. He travelled to Spain, where his gambling instincts won him almost £30,000. Racing was a passion, as were games and quizzes. At the time of his death, Llewelyn, who had inherited his father's fondness for alcohol, was well placed in an Internet share-dealing competition."

I had noticed a memorial stone to Aeronwy in The Boathouse garden, but nothing for Llewelyn. He would not have wanted one there, for his memories were painful. Like his father, he had a gift for words, but his fiction did not meet with the success of his copywriting. None of his science fiction or crime stories were ever published, and Geoffrey Gibbs felt that the sharp wit and intellect so evident in his conversation did not show itself in his prose.

My memories would have drifted away on the low tide of old age, had I not struggled to understand the sadness of a clever man eclipsed by the brilliance of his father. Abandonment and an unhappy childhood could have created a desire to escape. Drugs and drink would have followed after seeing his talents go unrewarded and maybe, like his father's gifts, diminishing. It would have been impossible to bear. I hope he found contentment in Dawlish before his end.

I picked up the pen, which was tied with string to "The Visitor's Book," and wrote a few bland words: It was not the place to write more.. Maybe this is?

Margaret Thurgood
Age 80 - Retired

raindrops in the flowers

raindrops in the flowers raindrops on trees pouring from the sky.
raindrops under the grass raindrops inbetween the bushes
forever still forever moving.

in the breeze

in the breeze the sounds awaken through the breeze voices are
lost in the wind. birds sing into the breeze songs brought to all in nature

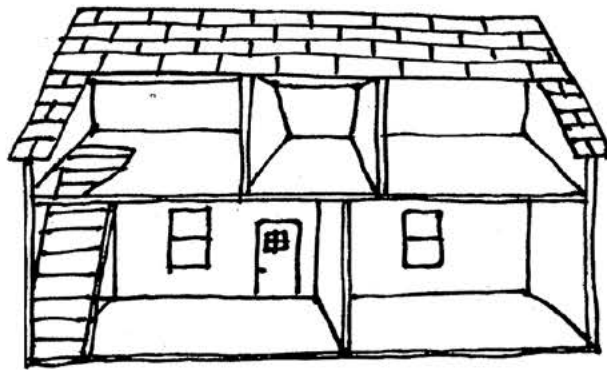
Tom Golblatt - Aged 10



POTS

The chatter of pots from homes locked, bellow
Cracked silent sound tiles, through halls bounced echo
Chimed symbols of drums
Called challenge to come
They laugh with a stellar stone rum-pa-pa-pum

ANONYMOUS - AGE 15



A Forgotten Swansea Scientist

Swansea has a proud history with regards to science and innovation, however some names have been forgotten over time.

In March, Swansea Museum in conjunction with the National Waterfront Museum were to host a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) day for primary schools run by the RAF. The days would look at cutting edge science and technology around aircraft design, coding and stealth technology. Unfortunately the day became the first museum event cancelled due to Covid 19.

In the lead up to the event as Education Officer, I always check our database and library to see if the museum has anything of historic interest linked to the subjects. During the course of searching I came across a book by R. Borlase Matthews, 'The Aviation Pocket Book for 1913'. It would be very early days in terms of aviation, the Wright brothers had only succeeded in taking to the air briefly a decade earlier in 1903.

The book runs to 175 pages and has chapters on design, structural materials, engines, piloting and navigation. All very different to the cutting edge science the children would be exploring. Reading the contents and thinking it may be of interest for the children to see how technology has moved forward, my eye was drawn across to the book's preface on the adjacent page. At the end of the preface I notice the following sign off.

Richard Borlase Matthews

January 1913, 5 Gloucester Pl, Swansea

Richard Borlase Matthews was born in Swansea in 1878. His working life started at the age of 12 in the Merchant Navy with a company in which his father had a financial interest. He later became an apprentice at one of the tinsplate works in Swansea and then took a degree in electrical engineering at a London university. On completion, he went to the United States for several years working for the General Electric Company. Whilst in the United States he witnessed a major historic event, which he mentions in the preface to the book.

Although the Wright brothers had succeeded in getting off the ground in 1903 they were far from having a viable aircraft that could fly any distance. In 1908 they were ready for their first public demonstration with a passenger. This took place on May 4th 1908 and Richard Borlase Matthews was there to witness it. I have yet to ascertain whether he was there as a private individual with an interest or had been sent by the General Electric Company. Either way, by 1913 he was back in Swansea, a member of the RISW (Royal Institution of South Wales the founding body for Swansea Museum), living at Allensmore, Sketty, with an office in Gloucester Place.

I cannot pinpoint when he returned from the United States but in 1912 he it appears he was working for London Underground. Swansea YMCA newsletter 'The Record' for December 1912 gives the following account of a visit by him to Swansea to give a lecture at the YMCA, which at the time was in Dynevor Pl.

"Mr. R. Borlase Matthews, Wh., Ex., M.I.E.E., came especially from London on November 19th and lectured to us on, "The latest appliances of electricity". With the aid of the lantern and screen the lecturer put on view a great many electrical devices as well as electric kettles, frying pans, coffee pots, stoves and many other electric appliances which were a great saving in labour....and how housework could be accomplished by the aid of an "Electric Mary Ann", in so far as to dust carpets, and even to the extent of making ice-cream".

At the outbreak of WW1, Matthews worked for the Air Ministry on aircraft design. In 1919 he purchased Greater Felcourt Farm in Surrey, lived there and experimented with introducing electricity into agricultural processes.

The pocket handbook series he produced ran from 1913 to 1920.

Richard Borlase Matthews died in a swimming accident off Anglesey in 1943.

Phil Treseder
Age 57, Swansea Museum

NORMAL

I remember hearing the word 'Corona' at some point way back when,
I even made jokes about it being a lager back then,
I didn't take it serious enough; I do know that now,
Didn't think this could happen in our world, didn't see how,
But now we're on lockdown and have been for a while,
And sometimes it's hard, some days impossible to smile,
Other times, I'm finding time for things I would never before,
And then I feel guilty for feeling positive when people are suffering so much more,
This whole situation is tough on the mind,
And it's even more important than usual to be kind,
Kind to yourselves and others when you can,
Check in with your friends, ring and chat to your Nan,
I'm not even missing what I thought I would, holidays, a drink in a bar,
There are a lot of things higher on my list that I'm missing by far,
What I wouldn't give to just go and visit the sea,
To sit in my Gran's house, sipping a cup of tea,
To have a day out with my sister and the kids, just to play with them for an hour,
It's just such a strange time, fighting this invisible power,
Some days are better and I can manage my thoughts well,
Other days, just being inside my own head is a special kind of hell,
But to look at the positives it's given us time to really look at life,
probably for the first time ever,
Now I know the things not to take for granted, and I promise to never,
I hope that when life does return, and that general mad rush is back,
I'll remember to keep my thoughts still on this track,
To appreciate the little things I'm missing now like a physical ache,
To remember to give something back not just to take,
Let's try to take something good from this sh*t time in our history,
But for now we can just pray that science will solve this awful mystery.

EMILY-JAYNE LEWIS - Age 29

Management Accountant



Sweet Dreams

Night Fell
like winter snow,
so that,
snuggling beneath its
black blanket,
we might dream,
and dream again,
of lost
lust

The day's a slow fast,
preparing us for the banquet,
at last.



Malcolm James Bullough, Student

The World Is Closed

I heard it on the news today
And we could not just turn away
“The world is closed” the TV beckons
Life was different in a second

A killer virus killing the many
Vulnerable, old, sick and frail
One by one the people fell
Hospitals began to look like hell

We hear the march of those in blue
Who want to save the many, not just the few
Life on the line day after day
Wishing this would go away

I myself wear the blue
Though I probably couldn't save you
I sit behind a desk all day
But I still hope for a better day

The fear is real, it's all around
It's in every touch, in every sound
I cannot see what may kill
But with dread my heart does fill

I saw a body taken out,
Through the car park, there it was
Another 3 not far behind
Death is now a state of mind.

At home when I go to bed
The sights I've seen fill my head
I cannot sleep, I cannot dream
Is this really what it seems

The world is closed, the TV beckoned
What a sight it is to see
The angels in blue we clap as one
But least we forget those we lost

The world has stopped but just for now
Every bright sky has a cloud
“Stay alert” is what they say
But it still wouldn't hurt to pray

For all those feeling blue
Be grateful Covid hasn't come for you
The “world is closed”, the TV beckons
Life was different...in a second.



Recina Dhillon
Age 34, NHS Worker

CONSUMER PANDEMIC

I have seen the eyes of fear
Owl eye movements in a supermarket
Those who weren't watching
Were emptying the shelves

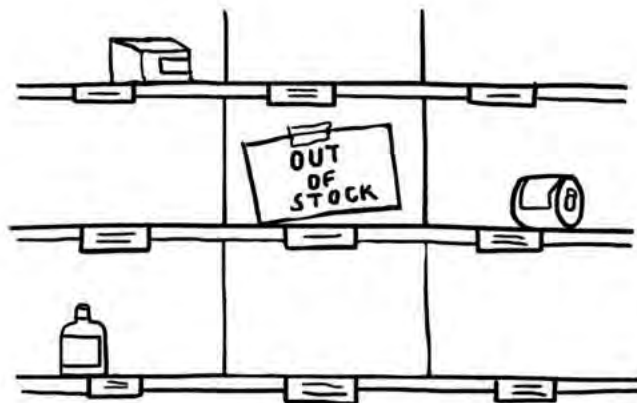
I have seen the eyes of fear
Unsure where the path leads next
Buy, buy, buy, just in case
Staring at the faces of whoever approaches
'Have they got it?'
'Do they look ill?'
'Are they a superspreader?'
'Will I be killed?'

I have seen the eyes of fear
Like those old zombie films
Where they head to the mall
It's all they remember

I have seen the eyes of fear
They were looking at me

Syd Howells

Age 47 - Museum Volunteer Manager



HANDS

The tiny little helpless hands
Of one who is new born,
Then chubby little grabbing hands
Sticky, mucky, warm

The hands that are inquisitive
So many things to do
Then hands so full of talent
As this sweet child grew

The hand that wears a ring now
A band of purest gold
That holds the hand of another
The two lives that enfold

The hands that held their baby
That washed and changed and fed
And after hours of toiling
Retired to their bed

The hands that helped their child
Preparing to be wed
That held their tiny grandchild
And washed and changed and fed

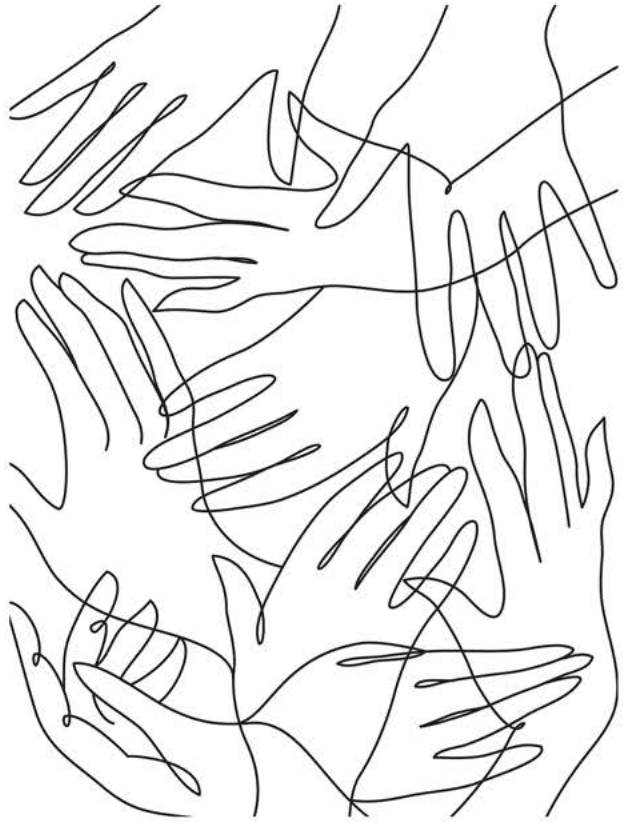
The hands now getting older
Are twisted and are bent
That now need help from someone else
Their energy is spent

The younger hands that stroke the face
Of the mother they adore
The older hands so white and thin
Sadly can do no more

The old and young with hands entwined
One life ends with a sigh
The hands in life which did so much
Have said their last goodbye

SANDRA COWELL

Aged 72 - Retired



KINDNESS

Acts of kindness can be large or small,
But once they're done can benefit all.
A simple smile can be all it takes,
To make a difference to lonely hearts that ache.

Be spontaneous when acting kind,
And share this quality with all you find,
Share your umbrella on the wettest of days
And offer time and resources in any number of ways.

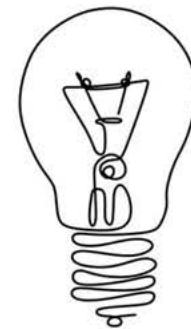
Being kind often requires courage and strength,
So reach out to those within arms length,
Be warm-hearted, loyal and true
And the kindness will surely come back to you.

Looking around one can often see,
So much warmth in humanity.
I end my rhyme on this uplifting note,
Goodwill is like gentle sunshine that gives us hope.



LIGHT

The light at the end of the tunnel is nigh,
The darkness has passed with a lighthearted sigh.
You dared to move at a lightning pace,
And be light footed to lighten the weight,
As light as a feather you will surely be,
When you always make light of what you see,
“Don’t hide your light under a bushel “ they say,
If you want to see light at the end of the day.
The light’s now shining as you walk in the room,
You’ve seen the light that’s replaced the gloom.



JENNIFER COOK

AGE 72, RETIRED CARE HOME ASSISTANT

WONDERLAND EVERYWHERE

We see madness in everyone we meet,
We drink tea every now and then whilst playing cards,
And we see cats who stay for one second and leave our sight the next.

You don't need a rabbit to guide you,
For every day is a day in Wonderland.



THE KEY

The world is a locked door, locked by fear, locked by black.
A door is yours to make, yours to find, yours to keep
Only you own the key.



Leigh John Bamford

Age 25 - Student

DECISION TIME

For many, life is a massive mountain, which they have to climb,
and not many leave a footprint in the shifting sand of time.
Of the millions of millions--not many leave a mark
for them--life is like a search for light--while groping in the dark.

There are no written rules to which we must adhere
and those we think we understand--are never very clear.
No map or written directions, telling you the way
to avoid the big disasters which threaten us today.

Because right now--serious disasters stare us in the face
a pandemic--then an economic meltdown--loss of jobs and businesses--
we must somehow replace.

We MUST realise and accept--we MUST find something new
or comes another pandemic--what are we going to do.

If we attempt to learn--from other folk's mistakes
and thus, find a better, safer road to take.
At least if we start learning from those who have gone before
maybe we'll not make the same errors any more.

Because down through the decades--we have so often failed
and even well planned efforts, can end up being derailed.
So many bad and sad decisions--which we dare not repeat
or ultimately, in the end--mankind will face defeat.
By following the same old route--disaster lays ahead,
if not by some new virus--then from lack of air--we still all end up dead.

It is so tempting and appears much easier, to retrieve the reins we dropped,
but not learning and no turning, is something that MUST be stopped.
This is THE opportunity to change the things which we have done wrong
learning from past experience--only then, carrying on.
A new business plan is needed--to replace our global warming economy,
because we cannot mend the money problems--at the cost of the ecology

ALAN FREDERICK REES

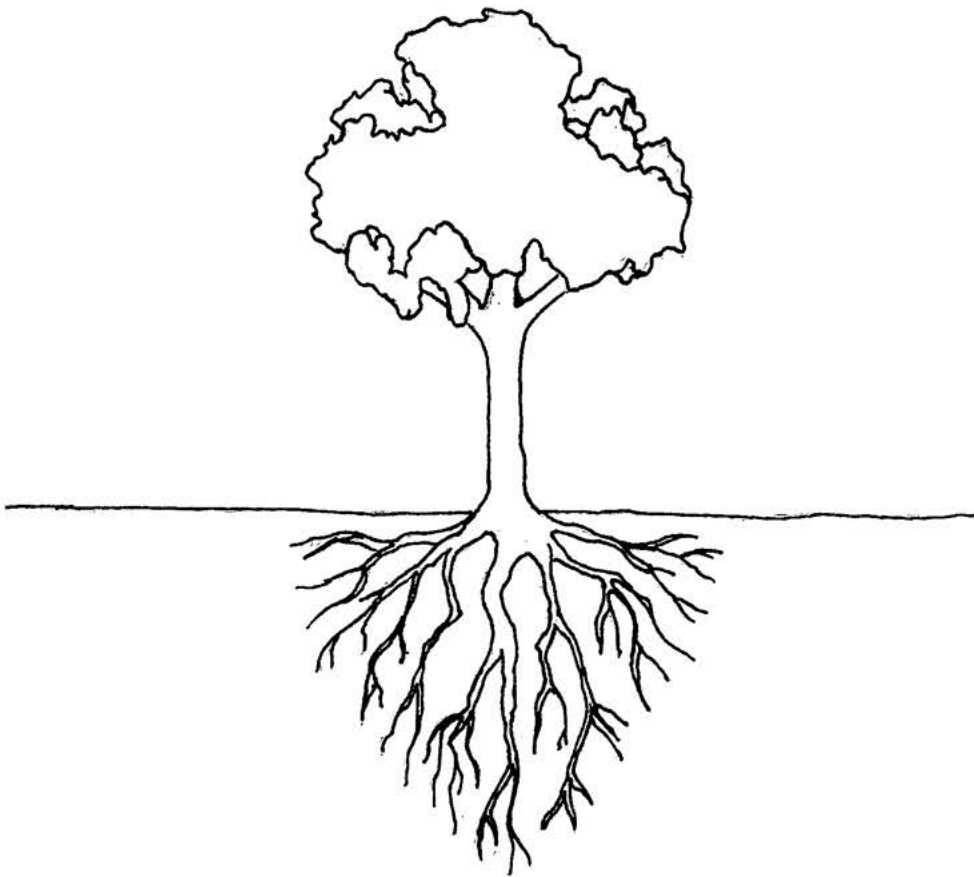
Age 84 - Retired



A NEW TRAIN?

Silence the birds and the squirrel squawk
Tear up the roots where the old oaks talk
Move on the foxes, dig up the nests
Centuries of habitat extinct, despite our protests
So we can be a little faster, and miss a little more
Of the wonder of woodlands and deny the natural law

A Vayro
Age 42



MESSAGES

The water's coming in
Nobody seems to see
getting cut off by the tide
Wave by wave, surely

She's trying to shout
But no sound is coming out
They just don't want to leave you see

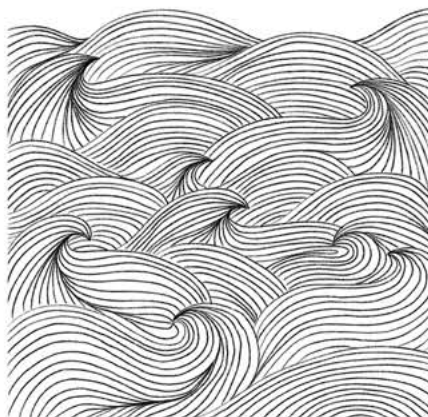
They were staring at the screens
So they didn't hear the screams
Of the people who lived closest to the tide

Each time the big rain fell
Each raging fire
They said it was nothing to fear
Each plague of locusts
Each flood
Each virus
They said it was nothing to do with us

The scientists shouted
But the papers kept them muted
'It's human behaviour' they cried

But we like how we do things (they said)
Its how we've always done things
It's more important than staying alive!

A Vayro
Age 42



HOMESCHOOLING

Every single homeschool day
Starts with good intention
But hope and cautious optimism
Should come with intervention

We've hidden screens, T.V. and toys
To keep the tasks on track
But you'd think we'd asked for Shakespeare quotes
Or launched a fierce attack

It really doesn't bode well
When activities start with tears
And a refusal to participate
Must have aged us fifteen years

Creativity is endless
But just when you think you've won
They've disappeared from earshot
To create their own homeschool fun

Like the sofa/quilt assault course
and upending all the chairs
Or with their brave and risky hat on
Build a rocket down the stairs

It's not all tears and drama
Some days are quite okay
Lessons learned and tasks ticked off
Then send them off to play

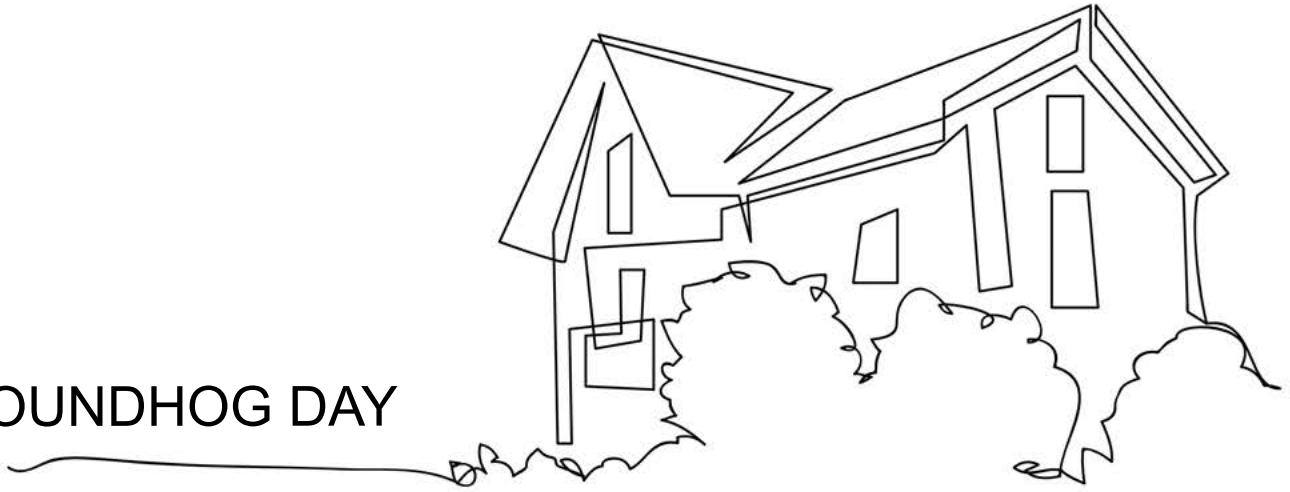
But the 'classroom's' never tidy
And patience favours fools
The kids are in bloody charge now
As they recreate the rules

Not as easy as imagined
To homeschool a young child
Killing dreams of awesome parenting
And sends us flippin' wild!

Victoria Woodman
Age 39 - Business & Operations



GROUNDHOG DAY



My life is like a scene from Groundhog Day
But I'm being good, let me say
I only walk for an hour a day
And I wouldn't have it any other way.

I've given up golf, a big part of my life
And I'm trying to be a patient wife
But I'm convinced that I'm giving Tim more strife
Because I've seen him behind me holding a knife!

Every day starts with "what shall I wear"?
And can I be bothered to wash my hair?
There is no one around to point and stare
So I look really scruffy, but I don't really care

Tim has gone bonkers painting the decking
While I look on effing and fecking
My mental health I know he is wrecking
For guilt at my conscious keeps on pecking

My phone is glued to my left hand
I'm drawing with people from a different land
I'm quizzing too, but that's not too grand
In fact perhaps I should be banned

When I pass the fridge I try to be discreet
Quietly open the door to secretly eat
Just a taster, a small little treat
Pretty soon I won't be able to see my feet

And the yard arm? Who moved that line
It's now 2 pm when I'm hitting the wine
That beautiful drink made from the vine
stay away Tim it's mine ..ALL MINE!!!

I bet all your houses are a sight to be seen
Gleaming and sparkling lovely and clean
Not me you see I'm not so keen
The day before a visit is when mine will gleam

I won't complain because I have good health
Although a massive reduction in virtual wealth
I have all the food I need on the shelf
And I can easily take care of myself

This is the time to think of others
Family friends and distant mothers
When we meet a big cwutch like no other
So tight and so long but take care, don't smother

So friends, I will see you on the other side
Don't take this virus in your stride
Take care, look after those by your side
When it's over we can all look back with pride

KIM HAWKES
Age 58, Retired

LEARNING TO LOOK KINDLY UPON CATASTROPHE

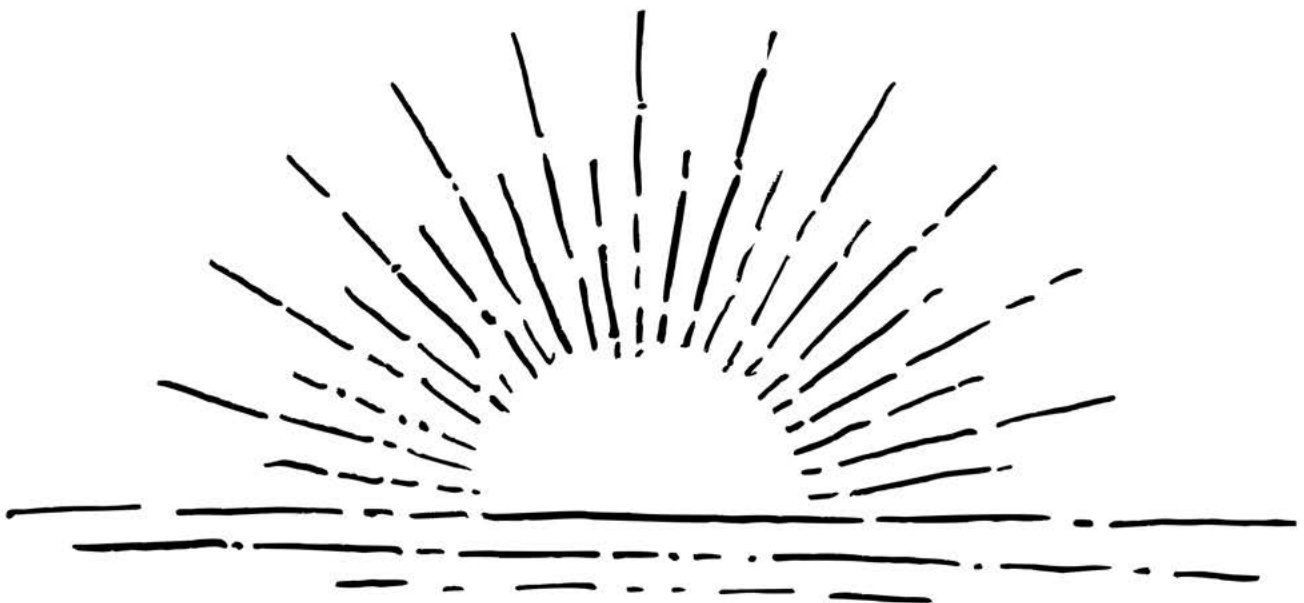
We are now in the very redness of things.
Think about our frailty, but do not
let it distract you from noticing how fresh
the wind's breath is now as you walk
your sweet beast. Now our loudest
conversation is the speech of trees.

Think of the kitten who holds a bee inside its mouth
for the furtive fizzing delight and the taste of nectar.
Look at the Reebok-clad sage sat beneath his tree
for he is there in every park. Call all
your lovers and tell them that even when the
darkness comes the night does breathe out again.

It is time now to turn off the news and
hold your screams loosely for they are brittle.
All the old ways of feeling are shattered now.
Mask cracked, we must pick apart the splinters
to the tenderness that lies below. Tomorrow
there will still be a sun to warm this new nakedness.

TRULY KAPUT

Artist



<https://youtu.be/-Yd5sQSLPMQ>

Lockdown?

Feeling guilty when all of you can see,
That at seventy one when most at risk,
This lockdown has not much affected me.
Even my walking is still spright and brisk

I take my daily walk down to the beach,
To swim with my mistress the mighty main.
And never does anyone rise to preach,
Social distancing there to see is plain.

But look you now, no way I want to catch
This Covid nineteen killer thing-me-bobs;
For all of poetry cannot dare match.
Hearts brave plighted to their caring jobs.

But then I read about their deaths and cry:
Oh why, dear God, oh why, oh why, oh why?

anti-social distancing

meeting an old friend
and the pain
of backing away
does not go away
with out smiles
stretching thinner
and thinner
passing by on the other side
with our thoughts

covid dawn

this light is the same, it is
we who have lost our innocence;
hit in the solar plexus
while the sun still shines.
darkness
breathless we count
our blessings

James Young

Age 71 - Retired



THE OTHER ROOM

About what
Was there to write?
Tonight, and today —
The day I had my hair
Cut by Kate, sat on a wooden chair
In the bathroom, and the floor
Collecting the wet black flecks.

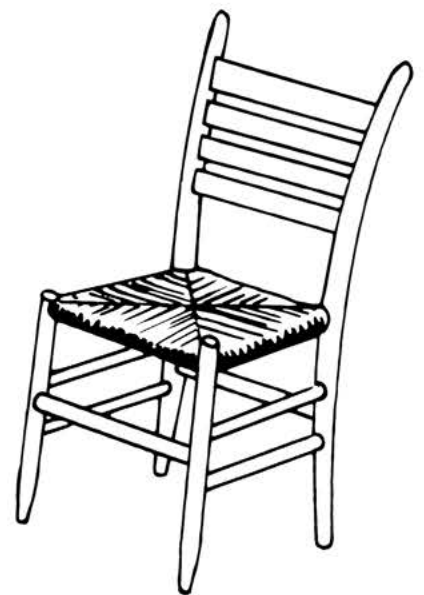
And when we drove a mile to see
The sky fall in on itself,
And I could barely breathe for the still sea,
Concrete below us. And here we heard
About the fire that had burnt in the common,
Mixed in with sounds of the wind in conversation,
On a radio from the other room.

No other new stories told,
And the young writing poetry too old
For themselves. The mythos, the moment,
All gone in a blaze of truth. Where are the poets of now?
And what do they know? Rambling of a past
They held only for the briefest instant,
A fraction barely extant.

And today, what of it?
From what is it made, other than walls and doors and routines,
Strung on a line of daybreak?
And I try to notice and remember,
Try to hang on to what it is
That I try and avoid evading.
Pages of open words, and only the sky opening,
Only the sea inviting. I have no control.
I can't say where it'll end, I can't tell it
Where to stop. I can't force it
To take the shapes which go beyond
Our familiar dimensions, and I certainly
Can't make it what I think it should be.

No time, another time,
This time, there will only be
A better time. This is not it,
But we press on, we press on.

I know all the conversations yet to happen,
I know the languages of tomorrow
And how they will change us, and how they will die.
There is no you or I,
And there is no room in which this poem sits.
That other room is much bigger,
And it will return, made new,
Though God knows how. There are more pressing matters.



Rhys Underdown
Age 22 - Musician

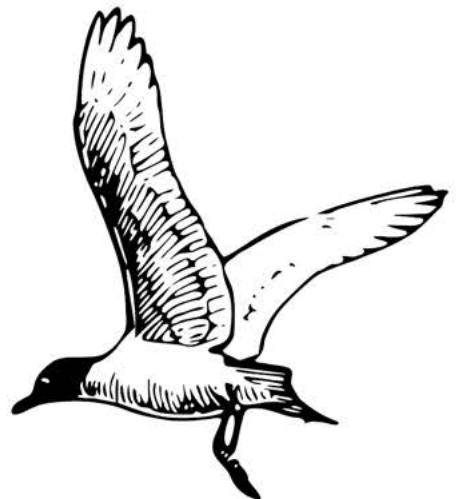
PRYING

You always hear it — the gull crying,
Calling with a fervent shriek,
And the world's breath rumbling
On the cliff peak;
Fighting the slow fight,
With its steady turning —
A deep yearning for something
Sightless, like a moon at night
So free and far.

But here we relent, and are
Happy to know this sea,
With its eyes burning,
Each wave, a moment saved.
But picture me,
Here at cliff-peak, pressing
For every syllable. Always knowing
That they must be there, somewhere.
They just take some prying.

Rhys Underdown

Age 22 - Musician



My Lockdown Story

I live in Penllergaer and we have been operating a volunteer service to people who are self isolating. I decided to join in because I wanted to make a difference in the community and to help people who are in need.

I had a phone call from the local councillor who wanted me to pick a prescription from the pharmacy for a elderly couple who were both self isolating. I was more than happy to help. I went down to the pharmacy and as I started to queue, the pharmacy closed. We were told that the pharmacy was going to re-open at 2pm. I went down to the pharmacy at 2pm and began to queue. I got to the top of the queue and give the names of the couple I was collecting for.

I received one of the prescriptions but I had to go back the following day to collect the other prescription. I was determined to get this prescription as I knew it was important. The following morning, I picked up the prescription and delivered it to their home.

In return, I had a pick of chocolate biscuits, a home-made bag and a card with a kind message inside. When I read the card, tears roll down my cheeks. I never done it to get something back but I just wanted to make a difference

Helen Worswick

Age 38



Household Haiku

The most poignant moment of my day noted in the form of Haiku, it's helped me reflect on myself, what I value and how I feel about daily life as an autistic 24-year-old art student.

These are selected days from a current collection of 51 haiku written for each day since the beginning of the UK lockdown.

Day 1

The cat she slumbers
Upon the back of my chair,
Her comfort comes first.

Day 5

People are selfish.
My love was endangered by
The lack of regard.

Day 9

Laughter fills the room,
I'm happy to play the fool
To help others smile.

Day 11

A conversation,
I smile and press my fingers
To the glass window

Day 16

The phone starts to ring,
Some worrisome news begins
A game of patience

Day 20

Relief is obtained,
The game of patience pays off
She has beaten it..

Day 24

Sweet scents of cider,
Sun blushed cheeks turn into a smile.
It's been a good day.

Day 31

Dancing to lighten
The feel of domestic life,
The dishes are clean.

Day 37

Comfortable seat
I sink deep into the chair,
Relaxed whilst working

Day 39

Full, sweet strawberries.
My mouth tingles with flavours
Of the summertime.

Day 40

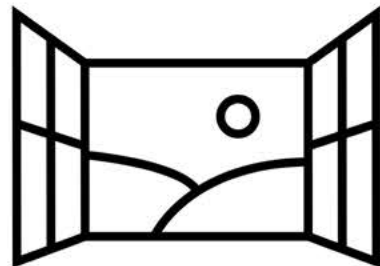
Laughter through the screen,
My mother's sweet voice returns.
I miss her soft touch.

Day 43

Foul moods fill the home,
Soon replaced with witty jokes.
The mood is lifted.

Day 49

The smell of fresh books,
My collection expands quickly.
It gives me such joy.



Lois Samuel

Age 24 - Art Student

My Lockdown Story

I live in Penllergaer and we have been operating a volunteer service to people who are self isolating. I decided to join in because I wanted to make a difference in the community and to help people who are in need.

I had a phone call from the local councillor who wanted me to pick a prescription from the pharmacy for a elderly couple who were both self isolating. I was more than happy to help. I went down to the pharmacy and as I started to queue, the pharmacy closed. We were told that the pharmacy was going to re-open at 2pm. I went down to the pharmacy at 2pm and began to queue. I got to the top of the queue and give the names of the couple I was collecting for.

I received one of the prescriptions but I had to go back the following day to collect the other prescription. I was determined to get this prescription as I knew it was important. The following morning, I picked up the prescription and delivered it to their home.

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Helen Worswick

Age 38

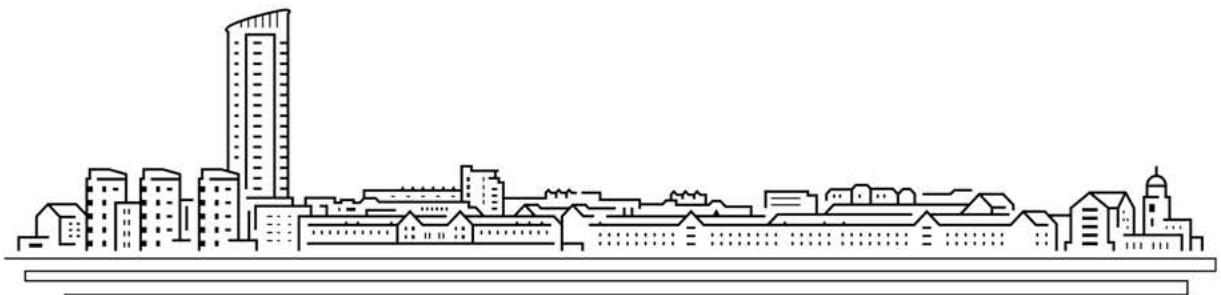


AN UGLY LOVELY TOWN

Aggressively friendly,
Weathered people.
Wrinkles valley deep with
Scars eroded by jagged Rock.
Tracksuits without olympians.
Just yesterday's boxers,
Twisted and turned inside out.
Grey misty mornings,
Roll into wet weary afternoons.
While lost runaway souls,
Trudge, not jump, through puddles.
Famous hills,
In desperate need of summits.
Deserted pier and drifting tide,
A lost seaside town with malingering pride

Gary Lulham

Age 35 - Sin City



King Goon - 'Three Cheers for the Fat Italian' Single review

Dripping down an Uplands gutter one of those nights, the kind of night where you're stuck at zero, looking out of those heavy heavy eyes when you see an acquaintance across the road (but not someone you want to talk to, no kind of hero) so you cross over that dirty street, covered in rain and wet leaves and maybe you see a promise of sodden celebration through a square of orange light, could be the Brunswick or the Tav.

Tapping the glass on your phone screen, but nobody answering. As you get closer, you become aware of an ungodly racket emanating from the establishment, shaking the window and alarming passing seagulls and stray cats. Squawks of sax and spikes of ska.

The best cure for a cold, lonesome night. The band are a motley crew, a many-legged beast, flailing around in a corner that can only be charitably described as a stage, and the room is full of people; staggering, drinking, skanking & romancing. 'Who's the band'? you ask the barman. 'King Goon - a bunch of reprobates and scoundrels if you ask me'. You count the cash in your pockets and order the cheapest pint you can, then take a mighty draught of the fine amber liquid and look around the room, observing the drunken wildlife of a Swansea night. The song finishes and they tear into the next with glee, the off-beats tumbling like dice under a frantic guitar.

There's a melancholic feeling to the tune despite its energy, though, and it makes you remember certain people you once knew - dissolute, charlatan characters, maybe - hustlers, dealers, stealers, but they were their own role models and had a certain bravery. Ah but that was bloody years ago, it's all so ordinary now. Where are they all these days? Realising the song is reaching its final chorus, you join the dancefloor and dispel all those memories in a burst of crazed drunken energy.

King Goon's single 'Three Cheers for the Fat Italian' is out now, backed by three bonus tracks. It's a great song, finding poetry and bleak comedy in the 'joyfully profane life of a true hustler.' It will be followed by their long-awaited album 'ADMIT NOTHING! DENY EVERYTHING! LIE LIE LIE!' Keep an eye to the ground and an ear to the air - it'll be worth your time.

TOM EMLYN

Age 26 - Musician



April, 2020

There is a war going on
But here, the garden is alive.
Daisies as bright as buttons
Adorn the grass,
Where the fox stalks and even the rat
Comes out to play.

There is a war going on
But the swallows are too busy
Talking down the wire
To notice that the world has changed;
An unease hanging
In this warm, spring air.

There is a war going on
But the sea is a millpond;
A two tone pane of glass,
Of azure and a deeper blue.
No breath of wind
Betrays this raging storm.

There is a war going on
But here, my son
Runs with an untamed joy,
Chasing away the clouds,
Under apple blossom,
Hung low with its own, engorged beauty.

M A Woods



THE SIREN

.....lying there's, eye's scribing, rolling..we,
like a viewer from above, See our sailor, face
decorated with spiralling colourfully, tribal
marking's, from the previous night of renegade
trance dancing, (unbeknownst to our space cadet),
interrupted abruptly as the siren's screeches tears
him rudely, back into reality.

Grissily groggily, his hand bangs, n knocks it to
the floor, silenced likes a blearily bleating lamb,
calling lost for her mother's nuzzling.

I turn and there, she opens her eyes, smiles,
and wraps herself-arms n legs, tenderly, all around me.
"Hello baby, you don't mind if I take my bath..my
head's a lil fuzzy.. you set my night on fire x"

Heading into make sum breakfast, find myself a lil
surprised to see mum n dad, already sitting there
"oh, your up early..", "no.." they're telling me,
how I must have set my alarm clock late..I make,
no excuses, and they're not surprised, "ah well,
I'll still get into work on time." Banging n
bumbling, I try'n recall a quiet early-ish night,
nothing exciting, n feeling I've satisfied their
curiosity, I mosely back through, unto to my guest.

Amidst a cloud of steam, she emerges herself, clad,
only in the littlest of towels.. hot water still
dripping, falling, clawing onto her skin, a newly
shed embodiment, afresh an enchantment unto what
seems like a dream...I can but just watch each step,
as left behind, little puddles of footsteps, back
into my room.

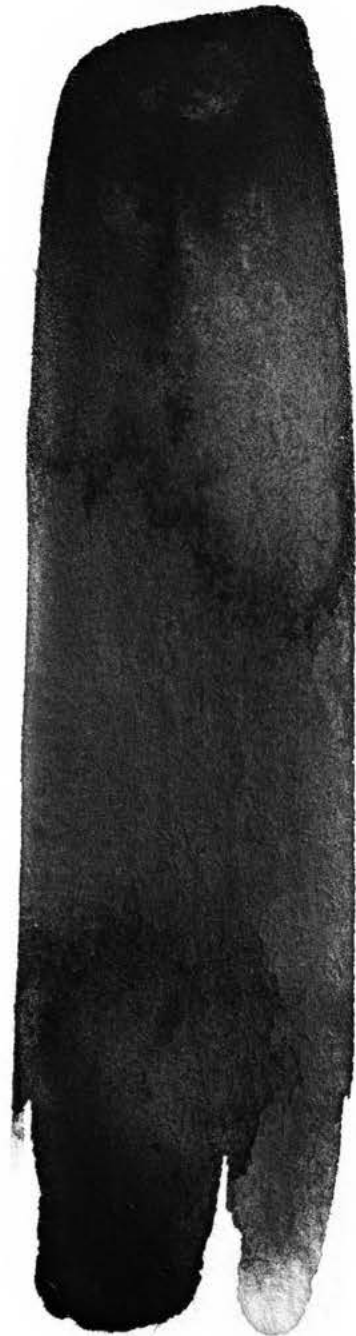
I wipe the moist mist from my mirror, my mind unclear
of a vision, once transcended n taken away, I hear
the skree of the siren, as the sight of my lie told
night before, becomes clearly unto me-it's not the
reds n the purple's n swirl's encircling, flames
from my eye's, nor is it burning passion of
unanswered questions...all I see, is my parents not
asking why.

I scrub n I scrub, now I'm ready for work,
back into the kitchen, Mysterio is busy eating down
in my breakfast, holding up her hand, showing of her
ring, telling how we got married, I just sit back n
rub my head, as she asks, if it's alright for seconds?
I leave her my key.

I go outside-I turn on my phone-I scroll through,
wedding ceremony, train journey, beach party, pictures
suddenly jarred..by a call, it comes thro 'SIREN', saying,
I've to pickup my kids "where have you been" you know how much,
I depend on you, but..."you just live in a dream."

Turn n hear the sea, she's blowing my mind, their amongst
the waves, calling me calling me, well, it'd be most unkind..
I reach into my bag, painted mermaid colours, clearly it's blues'
n green...whirling swirling, frothing, forging, call back, wave.n
dive in.

It's a little isolation..n a lot of what's not, our expectations.



Splodge

Age 49 - Lifeseeker

Dear Corona Virus,

You've taken my mental health from me, my freedom.
You came in the night like a parasite.
Your remnants is left like damp in the walls.

Silently lingering when I think you've moved on, you return by crippling my body,
taking away my basic human rights.
You taught me the importance of life and not to take the simplest of things for granted.

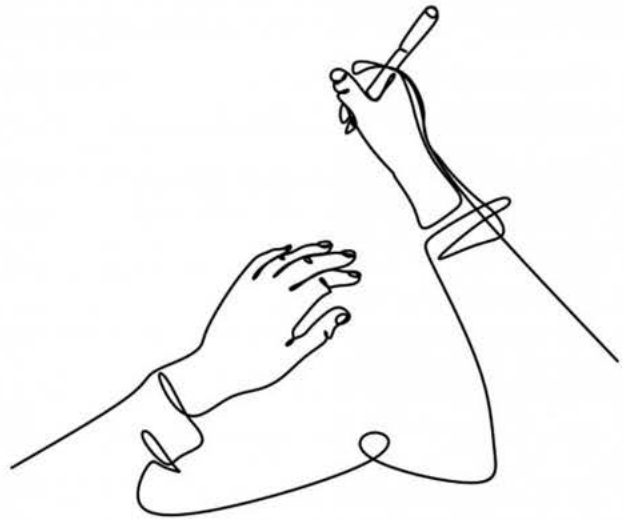
But when you chose me to harvest, you entangled my soul into your forest.
You have consumed my every waking hour and now its time to leave,
the curtain has be drawn and seats folded.
Its time to leave because your not wanted here.

I will grow strong again, stronger than your intoxicating hour.
My body is mine not taken by your power.

I am a mountain.
I am all the minutes in an hour.
I will look back and remember each of these god damn waking hours.

I stand tall like a soldier not ready to fall but a witness to this world wide historical fall.
Come with me and you will see the rainbows through the tall staggering towers.
We maybe small but we shall never fall.

Sheree Murphy
Artist



Proud

We are all so proud of all the front line workers,
and for everyone that is keeping us safe.
We are also proud of the children, as at times must feel
so confused and feel not safe.

But now you must applaud all the parents,
who are
doing such an amazing and fantastic job
For your children will look back on this time
and know that you were their friend, their rock and steel rod.

I Got Your Back

How I behave affects your life
How you behave affects mine.
Never before have we been so dependent
on one another.

We need to take responsibility as this virus has the
potential to divide us.
But also the potential to bring us together.
So please do not have ignorance and arrogance.

Let this legacy of the lockdown bring us together.
As we cannot get through this crisis without thinking
of others.
I have your back
Please have mine.

Inner Strength

It's surreal to hear how many people are dying, a
figure that I simple can't comprehend.
I'm praying for them and their families, and can't
wait for all this horror to end.

For those people who are still not listening,
and can't follow some simple rules.
Just stay in and stop being selfish,
because you are being the ultimate fools.

There has to be a light at the end of the tunnel,
short distance away I know.
It's is that belief that will keep us going,
and it's that inner strength we will continue to show.



AMANDA LOUISE ROBERTS

Age 56 - Cooking in the community ambassador / Events decorating service

Lock Feeling Down

There was a time when I didn't own a mobile phone,
And the Internet wasn't even a word.
I had long hair not a bald head
And I randomly loved lemon curd

Adventures weren't planned they'd happen by chance.
Same thing really when it came to romance
Now everything's known and everthing's shown
All here in front of us on the screen of a phone.

We're all on this train now, but we have different commuters
Some don't look out the window just at their pocket computers
But some of us remember the times before this
And what can be done to get back what we miss

We are the ones on the train who stare out at the view
Wondering what's outside and not what's on the menu
Now we have lockdown and the menu gazers fill the gaps,
With sharing some memes and community claps

And when this is all over the menu will be refilled and people will scoff
But some of us will still stare out the window wondering how to get off

Rich Black

Age 42 - Sales

